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# LABOUR ORGANISER

## CONTENTS

**R. T. Windle, C.B.E.; Appreciations**

**Early Votes—Labour Votes**

**Prepare Now for Spring Elections**

**Letter-box Votes**

**Christmas Bazaars**

**Campaigning by Committee**

**The Free Post**

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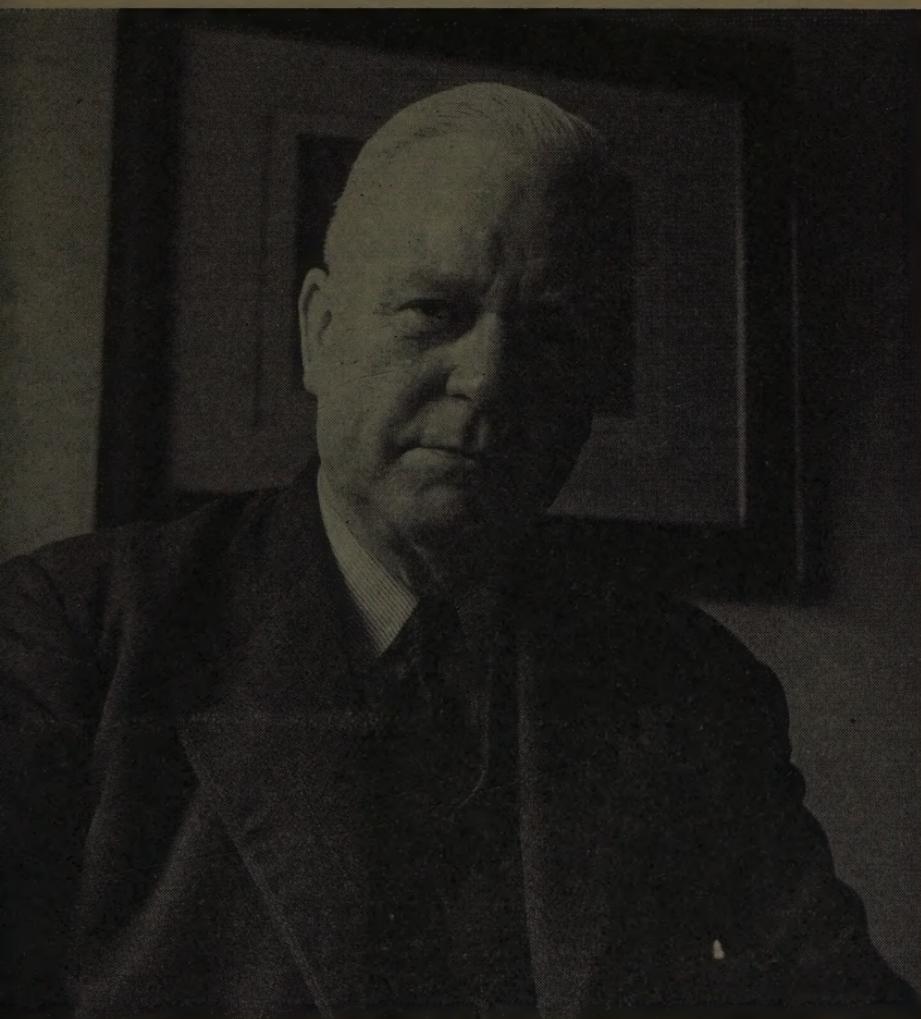
# THE LABOUR ORGANISER

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**R. T. Windle, C.B.E. (1888-1951)**

*(Appreciations appear on pages 190-191)*

***Tradition dies hard, but Labour voters must be persuaded that they can go to the Polls wearing working clothes and that women can vote without waiting to go with their husbands. Begin persuading now that an early vote is a better vote.***

## **Early Votes—Labour Votes**

BETWEEN now and the General Election every keyworker, every speaker on the public platform, every copy of your local Labour journal should on all possible occasions be exhorting our supporters to vote early on Polling Day.

Every canvasser going round the doors should explain when they secure the promises that to vote early in the day is a very vital way of helping the Labour Party.

Tradition dies hard but somehow Labour folk must be persuaded that it is a good and honourable thing to go to the Poll wearing working clothes and that women can vote alone just as they can shop or look after the house alone.

The modern Labour voting woman does not require her husband's company when she visits the Food Office, or when she takes the youngster to the Clinic. Why then, must she, in this vital business of recording her vote, persist in waiting until he comes home, washes, dines, then dresses up before thronging to the booths.

The only apparent valid reason is tradition; the Labour tradition that voting is a solemn thing for which one puts on the Sunday suit and best costume; and the tradition that families vote as families, and not as individuals, or singly.

If this be true then changing Labour voting habits is certainly going to be a long and difficult business, but it simply must be tried. No effort must be spared in breaking our people of this old, and perhaps once upon a time, commendable custom.

We simply must convince them, and quickly too, that the early vote is a better vote in every way. Not rational perhaps, but the springs of action are seldom very rational.

The Tories do not have this habit, most people agree that on the whole the Tory vote turns out much earlier in the day. The stock explanation that they are 'more leisured' simply will not wash any longer.

Some Tories are, of course, but not all. Many Tory housewives are just as busy as Labour housewives and that peculiar specie, the 'Tory working man', if he really is a working man, puts in a similar number of hours spread over a similar period to the day as his Labour counterpart.

Take the small shopkeepers as well. Many of their wives help in the shop as well as doing many of the things done by the Trade Unionist's wife. Yet, they vote early.

So too with the wives of the great majority of suburbia-dwelling businessmen. Their husbands get home later than many Trade Unionists but many such wives have already voted by the time the men hang up the bowler and put down the brief case.

'Of course,' comes the claim, 'if we have lots of cars like the Tories, it would be easier'—but that excuse, too, is unrealistic nowadays.

Labour Party car owners who are available all day have experienced the exasperation of hanging about most Polling Day with no voters willing to be driven, only to be swamped by eager passengers in the last hour.

How many of us in charge of an election and aware of where the Tory votes are scattered through every working-class street have had the realisation brought home to us that by six in the evening they have almost all voted.

It is perhaps true to say that 80 per cent of all Labour supporters vote after 6 p.m., and about 65 per cent of them vote between 8 and 9 p.m.

Too often our experience is that knockers-up who start out hopefully in the morning to get the housewife vote are met with bright but vague promises and towards teatime begin to hear the truth.

About 6.30 the Committee Room is invaded by a fine influx of keen, friendly knockers-up, who are sent out with the

promise cards to get the husband-wife combination on the move.

Within half-an-hour they are back, reporting that all the promises are *going* to vote but at this precise moment most are sitting over tea or busy by the kitchen sink. The Agent then has a sinking feeling that they are all going to get washed and dressed up before they set out, and the clock, which has slumbered and crawled all day seems suddenly to spring into top speed.

Of course the inevitable happens. By 8.15 there is a queue at the Polling Station and the checkers need reinforcement. The trickle has become a torrent and here is where the disastrous effect of the late voting really shows; by the time the numbers are marked off and the Labour

voters taken out of the promise-cards it is too late to send a fresh wave of knockers-up.

A few late-comers can be coaxed to set off for the poll after 8.30 but all too often when the doors close at nine, some of these potential votes are still in the queue outside.

This is a problem unique to no one type of constituency. It is general throughout the country and as such applies to every Agent. No doubt every Agent has thought about it, some may even have tried to remedy the bad habit, but in case it should be lingering with you do, from now on and particularly during the campaign, try and revolutionise this particular piece of thinking on the part of Labour voters and get them to the poll early.

## Prepare Now for Spring Elections

by CYRIL G. FAULKNER, Agent, Kettering

TO MANY PEOPLE the local government elections scheduled for the Spring of 1952 may appear too far off, as yet, for any immediate action to be taken. Nothing could be more misguided.

It is more than ever important to the Party that full and adequate preparations be made for these elections. Such arrangements should be given top priority and all activities planned in relation to their value to the Party's striking power in the actual election campaign.

The elections will embrace the triennial election of County Councillors, the election of councillors to the Urban, Rural and Parish Councils. Every Party should, therefore, have a busy programme ahead.

Our Movement urgently requires capable persons to serve on all the local government authorities. This is true in many parts of the country.

Now is the time to look around for good potential candidates, men and women to whom the thought of this kind of public work may have some appeal. It should be the urgent duty of every Agent and active worker to carry the appeal as far and as wide as possible.

Local government is now firmly established in British tradition, and forms an essential part of the framework of our democracy.

It is vital to the future of the Labour Movement that local government responsibility should be extended as a means to building common welfare.

Public service certainly offers an outlet for the deeply ingrained altruism in all of us and fosters the idea of doing by voluntary action the manifold tasks which are essential to a full community life.

At Kettering we have prepared a duplicated booklet in the hope that it will engender a careful sense of responsibility in persons of good will and induce them to undertake public work in the Labour interest and thus add new vigour to democracy in the field of local government; also in the belief that there is a demand by prospective Labour candidates for some information about the structure and financial transactions of local authorities.

When one complains that democracy doesn't function because of the ignorance of councillors of the business of local government, of the self-seeking of officials, of the lack of civic pride on the part of the public and is tempted to denigrate it, one should ask what is the alternative? Efficiency can be bought, but is the price too much to pay?

Voluntary organisations are necessary in the Nation-State to preserve the sense of individual freedom, and to safeguard man from falling into apathy and unconscious political determinism. There is a yawning gulf waiting to be filled with social purpose.

(Please turn to page 199)

# Letter-box Votes

by JOAN E. WICKEN

THIS article is a confession of bitter experience. In our constituency we lost the 1950 election because we never really got working on the Postal Vote. True, a letter was sent out giving long stodgy details of the qualifications and the importance of the subject; later experience suggests that in most cases it was never read. We also talked about it in committees and agreed that it was a job which must be done.

However, over 1,600 valid Postal Votes registered in the ratio of about 10 to 1 against, and the result—a Conservative majority of 28—taught many people, including myself, a very bitter lesson.

We have tried to mend our ways, and have learned that there are two things which must be done. First we must make people conscious of the Postal Vote and its qualifications, and then erect the machinery to transform this consciousness into results.

We started off by re-issuing the guide to the qualifications. But this time it wasn't an ordinary 'letter from the Agent', it was a duplicated sheet where the writing was broken up into short paragraphs and each qualification was illustrated by red 'stick-men', on crutches, loading into removal vans, or leaving home to work away.

In each case the appropriate form was drawn in miniature and the old address, new address, signature spaces, etc., clearly indicated. We sent out hundreds of these notices; Local Parties had copies for all collectors, they went to Trade Union Branches, to all our contacts in unorganised areas, and to all the other Labour sympathisers we could think of.

Perhaps I should state more clearly what I was trying to get over. In the first place that, 'we can win this election before it is ever announced' provided every individual member looks out for Labour voters who fulfil one or other of the qualifications.

Then the qualifications: that any voter who has moved from one Parish or U.D.C. area to another Parish, or from a Parish to a U.D.C. area, is entitled to vote by post even if it only means that he has moved across the road. The vagaries of Parish boundaries are such that occasionally by moving out of the Parish the voter moves nearer his Polling Station; still it is an advantage to use the Postal Vote provided that Party Members do the donkey work—fill in the forms, stand over the voters while they sign, and put the R.P.F.8 in the letter-box, naturally keep-

ing a note of the name and address of the person concerned so that it can be followed up at election time.

On the question of physical incapacity, anyone who has difficulty in getting to the Polling Station in bad weather or without an escort, is entitled to this service. In these cases Party Members should find the Doctor's name and do the sitting in the waiting room. (Lots of people who qualify for a Postal Vote on medical grounds do not see the Doctor from one week's end to the next, and it is dangerous to leave them a chance of losing the form meanwhile).

The final important qualification at this stage is often neglected, people whose work takes them away from home. Long distance lorry-drivers may only be away for 24 hours at a time, but who is to guarantee that they will not be away on the vital day? The R.P.F.7 (minus the Doctor's certificate) comes in useful for such voters, as well as for those who spend weekdays lodging in some other part of the country.

Following this leaflet we kept up a constant stream of reminders. In every monthly *Whatgoeson* (our duplicated newsheet) we brought up the Postal Vote in as novel a form as possible. Graphic illustrations of the Agent weeping tears of blood on the subject gave way to skipping rhymes, bad verses and parodies of popular songs. From the caustic remarks on these efforts and the way people quote the worst examples to the discomfort of the Agent we know that they are read and act as a not too gentle reminder of the subject.

After some months of this people groaned or grinned every time the subject was mentioned, and gave the impression that I was flogging a dead horse. However, a couple of days checking at the Registration Office horrified me and shook the Party. The workers had the subject always on their lips, knew the qualifications, but still only a trickle reached Shire Hall.

(Continued top of next column)

We then introduced Removal notifications to the Divisional Office as a second line of defence. A form was compiled on which all removals are notified: Name, New Address, For, Against, Doubtful, Register Address, Registration Number (where known), Action taken on Postal Votes. These forms were made up in pads, with an attractive cover and stiff cardboard base, and in many cases the Agent sat down with the Local Party and went through the Register name by name to get the changes up-to-date from November last.

On receipt of the form at Divisional Office the information is transferred on to In and Out index cards which are filed in numerical order (out) and alphabetical order (in) within their respective Parishes. Thus a notification from Cam Local Labour Party that John Smith is now at The Street, Kingscourt, is Labour, has moved from Troytown, Cam (Register No. 672), and that they missed him as regards a Postal Vote, is dealt with as follows: A Removal Out card is completed indicating his new Parish, and is filed under Cam. A Removal In card, giving the new address, is filed under Kingscourt. At the same time action is taken to get a Postal Vote application registered. Where the new address is in an area covered by a Local Party the secretary concerned is asked to take the form and get it signed—all other information is put on for them. If there is no secretary in that area, or for other reasons the voter cannot be contacted in person, then a letter is sent direct, with the form ready to be signed and posted.

At the same time, of course, this information can be used for checking on the Election Lists and seeing that Members are picked up in a new area. The system does mean a lot of record work, but now that it is in working order we have found a Party Member who (because of his employment) cannot work in public, to take on permanently the job of Removals Officer.

In the seven weeks since we started the Removals System we have registered about half as many Labour Postal Votes as in the preceding 15 months, and it is only just coming into full operation. It's a start; it will certainly back up the propaganda and other organisational efforts which we will have to make at Election Time.

## NEW APPOINTMENTS

Mr. W. P. Alston, aged 29, at present temporary Secretary-Organiser to the Colchester C.L.P. now takes over the post in a full-time capacity.

Mr. W. A. Masters with 22 years Party membership takes over from Miss Joan Wicken at Stroud and Thornbury.

Mr. C. D. Prior, at present Agent to Exeter Borough Labour Party moves to a similar appointment at Portsmouth. Mr. Prior recently designed an extremely successful canvass record book which created much interest.

Mr. F. P. Evans, aged 46, who has been a Party Officer for 25 years and an honorary Party Agent for 20 years becomes Organiser for the Middleton, Prestwich and Whitefield Constituency Party.

Mr. T. R. McMahon, aged 27, has been appointed to Edmonton C.L.P. He was previously Secretary-Agent at Wellingborough.

Mr. E. N. Knowd, Agent at Stepney moves to Heston and Isleworth.

Mr. H. Bell, aged 54 and with 32 years' Party membership has been appointed Agent at Berwick-on-Tweed.

Mr. J. Unsworth, aged 35, previously a Unitarian Minister, and with 18 years' Party membership, has been appointed to Taunton.

Mr. G. E. Easton, a former League of Youth Secretary with 17 years' membership has been appointed to Bath.

Mr. James Smith, aged 30, with considerable experience in Local Government elections has been appointed to Burton.

Mr. Cyril Bloor, aged 30, has been appointed assistant Organiser at Wolverhampton.

Mr. C. Loveless, at present General Secretary, Isle of Wight Labour Party, has been appointed Organiser for that constituency.

Mr. G. J. Insull, aged 36, has been appointed to East Flintshire.

Mr. R. Stewart, aged 41, Area Organiser in West Lancashire for the N.C.L.C., has been appointed to Dundee, C.L.P.

# Christmas Bazaars

by C. V. WOODS, O.B.E., J.P., Secretary, City of Leicester Labour Party

EVERY AGENT and part-time Secretary is aware of the increased costs of running a Party to-day. The problem is where to get the extra income to balance the budget.

Organising a bazaar on a large scale is not a new idea. Parties have been doing this sort of thing for many years and there is money in bazaars if an early start is made with preparations and members show plenty of enthusiasm for the project.

Running a bazaar is by no means a one man show. All sections of the local Party must get down to the job at least twelve months prior to the planned date if it is to be successful financially and otherwise.

We commenced talking about our three-day bazaar in Leicester more than twelve months ago when each Ward, Women's Section and the League of Youth were invited to appoint two representatives to serve on a Central Bazaar Committee. Each unit responsible for a stall should have its Bazaar Committee and efforts should be made to appoint people who have a flair for work of this sort and who do not normally do the day-to-day work of the Party.

We have in mind raising £1,000, but this is simply a target. We may find ourselves wide of the mark, but the important thing is to set out to achieve something.

Although it is a Christmas Bazaar, the date should be fixed well in advance of Christmas, before people have bought their presents and the other purchases which everyone makes at this time of the year. Our bazaar is to be held on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, November 29th, 30th and December 1st.

Plans must be made taking into consideration the accommodation available, and with us we are able to include an arts and crafts exhibition, a cinema, fun fair, stage show and, of course, a cafe to provide the inevitable cups of tea.

There is nothing expensive in all this. The arts and crafts exhibition can include almost anything, e.g., paintings, drawings, needlework, woodwork, plastic work, metal-work, etc. Remember people do like to display their handiwork. Some exhibits may be for sale and others may be on loan.

A children's drawing and painting com-

petition will usually produce some interesting entries.

The cinema is provided free by the Co-operative Wholesale Society Film Department, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester. The fun fair is in the hands of the League of Youth and, as usual, our womenfolk are taking charge of the cafe arrangements. The stage show is a play written and produced by a Party member which runs for some 30 minutes.

These things are important, because if one wishes to attract people to a bazaar where they will spend money there must be something additional to tempt them along.

Careful thought must be given to the choice of people invited to open the bazaar on each succeeding day. Film, radio and stage stars can be considered, but I think it better to renew acquaintances by looking round among old friends of the Party. One of our three choices is Lord Pethick-Lawrence who represented West Leicester from 1923 to 1931. Incidentally, he beat Winston Churchill in 1923 by a majority of 4,000.

There is the problem of financing the bazaar beforehand. Parties should get in as much money as possible through the sale of vouchers sold in units of 3d., 6d., 1s., and 2s. 6d. These can be supplied by the collectors to members in the ordinary Christmas club way and spent during the bazaar. The more vouchers sold means more money available to buy goods for the stall, or materials to make them, and also ensures customers. Orders should be given, of course, for the more expensive presents. Take what safeguards you can against counterfeit vouchers.

Saleable goods for many stalls can be home made and members are sure to have bright ideas for making things which cost coppers and can be sold for shillings.

For goods which must be purchased, it is advisable to contact a wholesaler, preferably a Party sympathiser, who will supply them on a sale or return basis.

There is much work to be done and success depends on the way the various stallholders set about their job of stocking and staffing, and the pre-bazaar sale of vouchers.

# Running a Discussion Group

WINTER EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES are now well under way. Hundreds of keen little coteries up and down the country are pondering their problems, inquiring, seeking the answers, and generally widening horizons, much to their own benefit and the good of the Movement.

Perhaps the most popular type of local Party education is the good old-fashioned Discussion Group. As with everything else, however, there are certain rules which make for the easier running of such a group.

First, let us get straight what a Discussion Group is not. It is not a public debate, argument, or Brains Trust; it is not a lecture followed by questions and answers and most certainly it is not a lesson led and dominated by an expert.

Each of these has its own essential place and can be very useful to any Party but they are different in method and purpose from Discussion Groups. They depend essentially on one or more experts leading all the time and doing most of the work while the majority remain passive, asked to do no more than sit and listen.

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From start to finish a Discussion Group is a *group* activity and as such presents its own problems. Everyone present must, for its success, take an active part and to achieve this there should, preferably, never be more than a dozen people present, otherwise some will be left out.

It is a good idea to have members of the group evenly distributed where knowledge of the subject under discussion is concerned. If some more than others have a wider grasp of the subject they may tend to dominate, which prompts the suggestion that if a chosen subject proves popular and more than twelve are anxious to take part, the number should be split, one group for advanced discussers, the other for those who lag a little behind.

Group leaders must be diplomats. They must be able to keep naturally talkative people comparatively quiet while at the same time making shy people give their contribution.

The choice of subject is also important. It must be something which can be discussed by everyone in a reasonable time, preferably not more than an hour and a half. It must not be too big and those taking part must keep firmly to the subject.

Nothing ruins a Discussion Group quicker than the coursing of verbal hares.

No subject is too big that it cannot be discussed. The bigger the subject the more breaking down it requires until the point is reached where it is easily understood in terms of day-to-day life. In a series of discussions it is possible to get to the bottom of even the most difficult or abstract topic.

Discussion Groups are not intended to pass resolutions or launch political campaigns. When the group has finished each member should feel that he or she has reached a point somewhere at the bottom of the matter under consideration, has increased his knowledge of all sides of the question, and either retained, or acquired, a point of view which can be held conscientiously.

Unanimity of views when talking is over was never the intention of Discussion Groups.

Anyone who has joined in a properly run Discussion Group will agree that it

(Continued on page 199)

# A Respected Chief

PROBABLY THE NEWS of Dick Windle's death would come as a lesser shock to those who were in close touch with him and had seen that all was not well with him during his last few weeks.

To me, who had not seen him for some months, the announcement of his passing seemed almost unbelievable, for I remember him as he was at our last meeting, bright-eyed, cheerful and full of plans for the future.

To everyone who worked with him in the Organisation Department of the Labour Party, Dick was three things at once. He was our Chief, our colleague and our personal friend. Looking back over more than twenty years' association with him I can recall not a single occasion when he left a feeling of rancour or annoyance. Indeed, I have never heard him utter a harsh or unkind word to or about anyone in my life.

This ability to be at once on good terms with everybody, anywhere, at any time and in any company helped to make Dick the best negotiator I have ever known. His ability to negotiate a settlement of the apparently irreconcilable was his strongest point and his greatest gift. Indeed, I believe he liked this aspect of his many duties better than any other, just as we all like doing the kind of work at which we excel.

He never took very kindly to routine. Desk work was a burden to him. He much preferred contacts with people than with documents. Probably he knew he could settle a controversy much more effectively and permanently by half an hour's chat with the interested parties than by weeks of correspondence. Work in 'the field' was his special *metier* and he was always delighted when he could pack his grip and catch the next train to some place, however distant, where his special talents were needed.

Dick was a Londoner of the Londoners, son of a Thames lighterman and born within sight of London's river. Yet he was the perfect cosmopolitan, as much at home in Land's End or in John o' Groats as in Walthamstow. Or, for that matter, in Athens, Macedonia, Washington or New York, for he was called to all these

places during the immediate post-war period to help settle specially difficult problems requiring the gifts of tact, diplomacy and tolerance which he possessed in such generous measure.

Although he seemed to take heavy responsibilities lightly, those closest to him knew that in his mind he regarded them as a sacred trust. A decision of one of his committees was, to him, not a matter to be questioned or argued about. It was a job to be done and he would set about its accomplishment unmindful of obstacles or difficulties. That he usually succeeded without making, so far as I know, a single enemy in his life, is an eloquent tribute to his greatness.

One of his most likeable qualities was his ability to relax and, when the job in hand had been dealt with, to switch immediately from the role of departmental chief, advising, directing and consulting, to the role of personal companion.

Yet even at such moments his mind would still be at work on the issues which he had apparently set aside, for, at half-time at a football match or during the interval at a show, he would bring the conversation back to the issue with a quiet suggestion which showed that he had been giving shrewd consideration to the matter all the time.

He never lived in the past, and not very often in the future. The present and the job in hand were of the greatest interest to him. Reminiscing over past experiences and speculating as to future possibilities were to him both rather futile occupations. Experiences of the past were largely shaped by circumstances present at the time but now evaporated. Future events would take care of themselves if we applied ourselves to present problems in existing circumstances. Not a bad philosophy, and one which fitted Dick's personality, methods and character without a crease.

The Labour Party has indeed been well served by its National Agents, and among them the memory and influence of Dick Windle will remain warmly and with great gratitude. We salute a respected chief and mourn a lovable friend.

JACK CUTTER

# —and Lovable Friend

MY BREAKFAST had no savour this morning, although from stodgy habit I ate it, because the *Daily Herald* had just been shot into the hall and on picking it up my eye had caught the grievous, clang-ing headline, 'DICK WINDLE DEAD'.

It is hard—bitterly hard—to realise that never again will any of us work and fraternise with that burly, cheery, generous man. Stunned at this untimely loss, one cannot attempt a full evaluation of Dick and his place in the Party.

It would be incorrect to describe him as 'brilliant', and it is significant that those who by common acceptance are classed as 'brilliant' rarely bestow or win the wealth of affection that Dick did. But his intelligence was massive, his knowledge of the Movement encyclopædic, and his infinite kindness balanced by a shrewd and penetrating judgment. He very seldom erred in his estimates of situations or personages.

He was a terrific worker, and made vast drafts on his great fund of vitality and stamina. Not only Party Agents and Officers, but thousands of rank-and-file Party members, from John o' Groats to Land's End, from Holyhead to Dover, knew him and claimed him as a friend. Perhaps the greatest of his many admirable qualities was his phenomenal capacity for companionship. Even in times of the acutest Party stress he could not quarrel, and in his own words 'going around with the oil-can' was a considerable part of his service to the Movement.

My own memories of him will ever be the more poignant because the last time I saw him, not many weeks ago, he came into the South-West to make a presentation to me, and said things about me to which I found it very, very difficult to reply.

Farewell, Dick. The Labour Party, and all of us who have known you, are the poorer now we have lost your genial and stimulating presence. You will continue to have a very warm place in our hearts.

CLEM JONES

OTHER OLD COLLEAGUES of Dick Windle's have written about his personal qualities. As one who has worked closely with him for the past five years, I should like to write about his characteristic qualities as an organiser.

The chief of these was persistence. This quality, essential in any organiser, was possessed by Dick in super-abundance. Having made up his mind on the course to be adopted, he pursued it to the end, refusing to be distracted by opposition, counter-proposals or doubts about its ultimate correctness.

Yet there was no steam-rolling. Infinite patience was displayed in persuading those whose support was needed, and the remainder were expected to fall into line. And usually they did, for after all it is what is that matters, and not what might, or should, have been.

Because of these qualities of persistence and patience, Dick Windle often achieved things where more imaginative men would have failed.

While he could be most outspoken and forthright, he never lost his temper, and if he did not suffer fools gladly, he did suffer them.

He was always willing to meet people and talk over their difficulties, even when their visits were in fact a thoughtless trespass on the time of a very busy man.

His faith in the Labour Party was unshakable. Harold Croft often quoted him as saying, in some crisis which the Press claimed would split the Party from top to bottom, 'If the old ship lost her bottom she would grow another one'.

At the last it was the stoical courage with which he faced the greatest ordeal of his life which outshone other qualities. Before he went into hospital, a few days before his death, he visited the offices of his colleagues in the Organisation Department, and the picture of him sitting brightly chatting for a few minutes before he went out of Transport House for the last time will be an everlasting memory for each of us.

A. L. WILLIAMS  
Assistant National Agent

# The Agent's Right-hand Man is his Marked Register

A WISE AGENT WILL MAKE EVERY ENDEAVOUR TO SECURE A RECORD AS FAR AS POSSIBLE of the political views of the electorate in the constituency for which he acts. This would appear to be the practical and commonsense thing to do and those Agents who have built up a marked register know only too well what helpful results it yields in increased efficiency.

TO COLLATE AND RECORD THIS INFORMATION WILL PROVE OF REAL VALUE IN THE TASK OF organising the Party machine, and what is equally important, of fighting elections with a basis for success.

TO SAY THE LEAST, MUCH OF THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM THE ELECTION CANVASS, during membership campaigns, information gathered from items in the local newspapers, from callers at the Party offices, or personal data from members and so on, is too often passed over and neglected.

HERE IS A PRACTICAL METHOD FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION, SOMETHING YOU MIGHT LIKE TO start on now. In the Agent's own copy of the Register of Electors—printed on one side only—suitable markings can be made against elector's name to indicate the information obtained, for example:

Red	Labour supporters.
Blue	Tory supporters.
Lib.	Liberal supporters.
Com.	Communist supporters.
Blank	Doubtful.
R +	Removed: address known.
R —	Removed: address unknown.

Then against the actual name could be added such notes as: Mrs.—Miss—J.P. Councillor—The Rev.—or any such useful information which would ensure that all persons are correctly and fully addressed when sending literature.

ALL SPECIAL NOTES CAN BE SET OUT ON THE BLANK PAGE OPPOSITE, MAKING SURE THAT THE particular information is recorded, for example:

- 362 Brown, T., removed to 20 High Street, Anytown.
- 727 Smith, H. C., deceased.
- 1234 Goodman, I. B., Party Member.
- 2345 Jones, U. R. A., Tory Councillor.

NO FURTHER WORD OF MINE IS NECESSARY TO POINT OUT THAT WITH ALL NECESSARY information available it should be put to the very best possible advantage and to add the thought that even a little information is better than no information at all.

**ALAN J. HERBERT, O.B.E., J.P.**



**MORTONS FOR STATIONERY**

Write for samples and new List of ENVELOPES, DUPLICATING PAPERS, STENCILS, INKS, TYPEWRITER RIBBONS and CARBONS etc. as supplied to scores of Labour Party and Trade Union Offices Mortons, 37 Wheatsheaf Hall, Wheatsheaf Lane, London, S.W.8

# Meeting the Electors

by COUNCILLOR L. RIGBY, Stoke North, Ward L.P.

'BUT WE NEVER see the Councillors after they have been elected.' How often has one heard that complaint, and how often, it must be admitted, is it made with some justification?

The smallest electoral unit is the local government ward and it is there that the greatest measure of personal contact between Labour representatives and electors can be maintained.

The ward is the place where membership can be increased easiest, and, by showing that Labour offers a better standard of representation it is easiest to increase the confidence of the people in Labour by genuine ward activity.

Stimulating interest at ward level can easily dispel apathy. By way of illustration let me detail for you what we in this Party have done.

In planning our campaign we settled on certain basic principles. We would meet the electors during the summer months after the local elections had taken place. Speeches would be limited—very limited—mainly we were concerned with discussion, suggestions, and answering as many questions as people cared to ask.

For the initial meeting we selected the ward's post-war housing estate. We wondered how the people living there felt about their houses. Were they satisfied with their communal front gardens? Had they any particular or general complaints? The first meeting was held on a piece of open ground in the middle of the estate, attended by 100 people from the 200 houses.

This meeting was so successful that the tenants themselves asked for a further meeting to learn of our efforts to rectify their complaints.

We made mistakes in our initial organisation, but we profited from them. For instance, we had a prominent Party member from the ward to chair the meeting, learning afterwards that because of his close, almost daily contact with the audience, the street collector is the best man for such a job.

We now know that a Sunday morning is not suitable, and that for women, the evening is preferred.

With council tenants we always offer to examine their houses after the meeting if the people themselves feel they have complaints which warrant this.

A special leaflet advertises these meetings, listing as well the names and addresses of the local ward councillors together with the council committees on which they sit.

The local Press were invited to the meetings and this resulted in excellent coverage. Indeed, after the first meeting we received editorial praise for having established this fresh approach to the problem of creating interest in local government.

If the local papers could not send a reporter they received a report which was always published. We learned, too, that a short, succinct, human-interest story met easier with the editor's approval than a long screed listing every trivial point.

Some criticism developed inside the Party because councillors were named in the Press and not the Party itself. The initial conception of the ward, however, was an open invitation to electors to meet their councillors and from this the actual Party drew credit because the councillors in question were known Labour councillors.

We decided not to impress at this stage the benefits of Party membership, feeling that this might make the basic idea of the meetings suspect.

The mere fact of councillors having been available to the electors will, we feel sure, achieve long-term results. The ground has been laid and our next Membership Campaign should show some success. More than that, when the next local elections come round people will be inclined to say 'I remember him. He's a good bloke. Remember when he came to see us'. The councillors, too, will be able to speak with even greater authority in the Council Chamber.

It is intended that the campaign be established as a regular summer practice. The meetings will provide an added stimulus to our Party as a whole, giving us something really worth while to do during the summer months when the tendency is to let-up on Party activities.

# Campaigning by Committee

by NORMAN CARR, Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, Bridgwater

AT Bridgwater we are operating a Campaign Committee as a permanent feature of Constituency Party Organisation. The Committee was elected, and although reporting to the Constituency Party, has been given power to act on its own authority.

Membership is made up of the prospective candidate, the Agent, Records Officer, Transport Officer, Meetings Officer, Public Relations Officer, two trustees, and a number of Sub-Agents determined by the General Council.

The Agent must be the head of the campaign, and although he may delegate part of his function to various officers of the Sub-Committee he will remain legally responsible for any of their actions and must therefore satisfy himself constantly that none of their activities endanger his own position.

## Sub-Agents

The Sub-Agents, a term used by us to indicate status, may accept any part of the Agent's duties as authorised by him within their own geographical area. They will normally be responsible for Electoral Roll checking, canvass organisation and records, arranging Committee Rooms and advising on poster or other propaganda sites. They will also co-operate with the Meetings Officer and Transport Officer in any arrangements these officers may be making in their areas.

The Records Officer will keep the central record of canvass results. He will also keep in card index form a complete record of the names and addresses of all known elector-sympathisers.

Ideally the records should be kept in duplicate card indexes, one in strict alphabetical order of electors' names and the other in 'walking order', or such form as the Electoral Roll may show. The card indexes should include the suspected political sympathies of every voter in the constituency.

Cards may also have on their reverse side any other useful information, such as: willingness to speak on our behalf; ownership of car; willingness to lend rooms for committee purposes; whether an invalid requiring road transport, etc.

The Transport Officer will endeavour to find the largest possible number of sympathetic car owners who might be per-

suaded to lend their car, with or without a driver. He will list the names and addresses, together with telephone numbers, if these are applicable, of such volunteers. He will also record the registration number and seating capacity of the cars offered. He should also note whether the car will be available before polling-day, on polling-day, or only for part of polling-day.

It will be part of his duty to allocate the cars between the various polling areas according to their estimated needs, and also co-operate with the Meetings Officer in finding cars for the transportation of speakers, chairmen, stewards, etc., to the actual election meetings.

The Transport Officer will keep a central record of all electors found to be in particular need of transport through physical disability or distance from the polling station. He will pay particular attention to electors known to be sympathetic but residing just outside the Division whose postal votes have not been arranged.

The Meetings Officer will make himself acquainted with the names, addresses and telephone numbers, where these are applicable, of the secretaries or letting agents for every hall or room in the constituency which might be of possible service for public meetings.

He will also advise these agents that he is the officer responsible for bookings and endeavour to establish personal relations with them.

## Meeting Arrangements

He should also draw up in complete detail the programme for each evening of the campaign, remembering to include the name of the principal speaker, whether or not the candidate is speaking, the chairman and any supporting speakers, also the team of stewards, collectors, literature distributors, etc.

It may also be necessary for the Meetings Officer to prepare little sketch maps clearly showing the route to be followed

*(Continued at top of next column)*

between villages and the location of meeting places.

The Public Relations Officer will acquaint himself with all possible poster sites in the Constituency and learn the owners or persons responsible for such sites.

He will make himself acquainted with the names and addresses of all newspaper editors, news editors and reporters for any, or all newspapers circulating in the constituency. He should also make himself known to them personally.

#### **Posters and Propaganda**

In conjunction with the Agent he will be responsible for drawing up all posters considered necessary and supervise their printing. The Election Address and any supplementary propaganda leaflets or material will also have his advice. To him will fall the responsibility of distributing to Sub-Agents all propaganda material and the advising of relevant newspapers on every meeting held in support of the candidate.

Should any newspaper not send a reporter then he will make sure that the news editor concerned is supplied with a suitable report.

Advertisement of meeting or meetings programmes thought necessary by the Agent will also fall among his responsibilities.

A most important duty of the Public Relations Officer will be a careful scrutinising of all newspaper correspondence columns circulating in the constituency and ensuring that suitable answers be sent to any letter published.

He will compile the scrapbook of all cuttings relevant to the campaign and the election, be responsible for the distribution of loudspeaker equipment and will make sure, finally, that every meeting is adequately and competently covered from the publicity point of view.

The Trustees will be responsible for finance with the proviso that the Agent is responsible in law and that he must formally authorise any expenditure incurred in the campaign.

They will supervise the Campaign Fund and assist in raising this before the election.

With regard to Optional Members, Constituency organisations may feel themselves capable of sustaining and being needful of a slightly larger Campaign Committee.

Such additional officers might include an Electoral Roll Supplementary Officer to look after the Supplementary Register—Servicemen, Postal 'Y' voters—and to make special arrangements for them to receive attention.

It might also be felt advisable to include an 'Ideas Man', someone to act as a fount of ideas similar to those employed by advertising agents.

The Committee have various general duties assigned to them, such as arranging canvassing and making sure that every canvass result is carefully tabulated and transferred to the Record Officer's lists or cards.

The election canvass itself should be carried out by a specially recruited team of some dozen members. Canvassing is done with the candidate present and with the speediest ascertaining of electors' sympathies. Any controversial question or problem raised on the doorstep is referred immediately to the candidate who should keep himself available in the middle of the team.

When the candidate is not present, ordinary canvassing, such as checking the roll, can be carried out.

If no reply is received at any house the candidate's visiting card (produced in quantity beforehand) should be left with an appropriate message.

Canvassing should be carried out if possible during the day-time in the area where a meeting is being held on the same evening thus allowing two jobs being done almost simultaneously.

#### **Rallying the Workers**

Careful records should be kept of every potential election worker, and when the election is imminent an invitation sent them to join the election team.

This letter could be written in long-hand by the candidate, made into a block and printed. It should be followed up by a personal call from a Campaign Committee member or Party Officer who inquires what specific duty, if any, the person would like to undertake. All workers should be given the names and addresses of Sub-Agents, a copy of the meetings programme and the telephone number of their most convenient rallying point.

**Organisation is the very basis; everything depends upon it. No matter where we look, at local government or international policy, they can only be implemented by an efficient organisation. So too in Party affairs.**

# REPORT ON A SUMMER SCHOOL

by A. T. HUTSON, Romford

**I**N MAKING THIS REPORT on behalf of the Party Organisation Group it is my pleasure to report that we found nothing seriously amiss in the Party.

We feel, however, that there is a real necessity among members for increased knowledge in all branches of applied Socialism. In the fields of Local Government and Foreign Policy it is particularly important that those who hold office in the name of the Party, no matter how small that office may seem, be acquainted with all the relevant facts. To do this they should have easily available all possible information and if necessary, training given them to present our case with the utmost completeness.

It is this knowledge of fundamentals which cements the Movement together in

tolerance and understanding and on those who have studied the first principles of Socialism falls the main responsibility of propagating our ideals.

We feel, however, that despite the importance of the two particular departments which I mention, not even their greatest work can be finalised without a full knowledge of Party Organisation.

Organisation is the very basis; everything depends upon it. One cannot even arrange a meeting or do anything in the least constructive without some form of organisation. No matter where we look, at local government, at international policy, they can only be implemented by an efficient organisation.

So too in Party affairs. With successful organisation chaos is replaced by efficiency, and people are able to effectively do more and better work in a shorter time.

The Group found that the blue-print of Party Organisation is well constructed and an almost perfect medium. We have no criticism to make of the general set-up. In fact, we aim at trying to raise the efficiency of our own local organisations to the standards laid down by the curriculum of the course.

We realise, of course, that every district has its difficulties but the Group has learned that some form of standardised organisation must be implemented so that the Party can move onward with smooth efficiency all over the country.

The basis has been given us and we must strain all our resources to overcome local difficulties, determined that every ounce of tolerance, co-operation, enthusiasm and experience be coupled to our organisations ensuring the best from everyone.

It would not be human if some weakness was not revealed. Those we have discovered and thought important enough to mention, we place before you for your consideration.

We found that there was a serious lack of the rather specialised knowledge which Party officers should possess. This was especially noted in the case of Treasurers, and, as money matters are generally

*(Continued at top of next column)*

## THE GLOVES ARE OFF

**So—get your facts straight**

With KEESING'S up your sleeve you will no longer be cornered for the want of facts, because this reference tool will never let you down on the important questions which affect our country and the world.

You will always—even after the elections—be right up to the mark, because every week a fresh supplement is added, covered by an alphabetical Index which is perpetually reborn.

*There is no talk through any hat  
Which KEESING'S cannot make fall flat,  
Enabling you to think and act  
Based not on Fiction but on FACT.*

KEESING'S, 66 Bristol Road, Keynsham, BRISTOL

critical, faults in this branch of organisation tend to show more quickly—and are often more disastrous.

Secretaries, especially the voluntary General Secretary, are, in a somewhat lesser degree, affected by this same malady. In consequence of these shortcomings the Group recommends that Head Office institute some form of education for Party officers giving instruction to them in their particular field of activity. We also recommend that any such scheme be regional in character and embodied in a quick and simple form so that inexperienced people will have the opportunity of receiving a rudimentary knowledge peculiar to their needs.

We also urge all organisations to make more use of the Marked Register. This should be the portable 'know-all' of every Secretary and Agent. Information such as membership, canvassing, individual qualifications, window bills, cars, telephone, ability to speak, etc., can all be simply incorporated in the Marked Register.

The Group also stresses the importance of every Party officer being thoroughly acquainted with their Standing Orders, and all methods of procedure. Such understanding eliminates confusion with

a consequent maintenance of interest and activity. This applies mainly to secretaries who have the preparing of agendas and to chairmen who implement them. We realise that workers are voluntary but let us not make this an excuse for slackness.

We place strong emphasis on the subject of the selection of Party officers, particularly chairmen who, it is felt, can become the leaders of political thought in their area as well as liaison officers between the executive and the rank-and-file. Similar care should be exercised in the selection of local government candidates.

Publicity is a branch of organisation which can be more of a hindrance than a help if not handled properly, and we urge a more practical approach to this problem, especially in the sale and delivery of literature.

With regards to the League of Youth this may well be the most important facet of our work. Young people hold the future of our Party. We must realise that the time will soon come when we hand over to our younger comrades the responsibility of carrying on the work and organisation of the Party.

We have had illustrated here this week the undeniable qualities which our young people possess and feel proud that we can point to such a group, capable of carrying forward our hopes for the future.

We urge all local Parties to do more than is being done at present to incorporate this vital part of our Movement into all branches of organisation.

Two points came out during the Course which we thought were not generally appreciated. First, the importance of the Postal Vote, sometimes hundreds in a constituency. Please make certain that your local Party is alive to this hitherto often neglected vote.

Second, will all young people please note that a person becomes legally of age on the day before their 21st birthday. This is useful information in respect to voting nominations, etc.

In closing we would like to re-emphasise our conviction that without efficient organisation our Party will slow up. We appeal to everyone to appreciate the vital necessity of thorough, sound organisation and ask them to carry out faithfully instructions given by more knowledgeable and perhaps better qualified members.

Construct, do not obstruct, and our great Movement will stride forward easily, smoothly, and with much less effort, towards the Socialism we all so much desire.

## Paper and Ink are not enough

If paper, ink, type and machinery were all that were needed to make a newspaper, every newspaper would be alike. But they're not—because far more happens in the world every day than any paper has room for, so that every paper has to decide what news to put in and what to leave out. The only national morning newspaper completely at one with the Labour and Trade Union movement in Britain is Labour's own paper, the DAILY HERALD. Its policy is to report as fully as possible the news of the day, vital to ordinary men and women and to comment on it fairly and freely in support of Labour's cause. Spread its readership: it is a vital influence in securing support for the interests you all have at heart.

**DAILY  
HERALD**

*Labour's own  
National Daily Newspaper*

# The Free Post

Section 79 (1) of the R.P.A. 1949. "A candidate at a Parliamentary election shall, subject to the regulations of the Postmaster General, be entitled to send, free of any charge for postage, to each elector one postal communication not exceeding 2 ounces."

## Arrangements with Local Head Postmasters

Must be made at least one clear day before first postings are to be made. If the candidate desires to post communications at more than one office, and under the control of different Head Postmasters, all the initial arrangements should be made with only one of them.

Candidates are advised to submit specimen envelopes, folders, wrapped packets or cards, to the local Head Postmaster in good time in order to ensure that they conform with these Regulations.

Agents contemplating dispensing with envelopes for election communications sent through the free post should consult with the local Head Postmaster about the folders or wrapped packets before they arrange their printing, so as to ensure that the printed communication can be folded in such a way as to conform to the Regulations without damaging the effectiveness of the publication.

## Election Material Only

Every package must only contain matter which relates solely to the election. Communications which include advertisements or other extraneous matter must be prepaid.

No package however made up may exceed 2 oz. in weight, or be less than 4 in. in width. The maximum dimensions are as indicated below.

	Maximum Length	Maximum Depth
_packets in closed envelopes ... ...	9"	4½"
*_packets in open envelopes ... ...	9"	4½"
†_packets in addressed wrappers ... ...	7½"	3½"
†_folders ... ...	7½"	3½"
Cards (sent unen-closed) ... ...	5¾"	4½"

\*The opening should not normally exceed 4½ in. Exceptionally, objection will not be raised to the use of envelopes not exceeding 3½ in. in depth with a tuck-in flap along the top not exceeding 6 in. in width, nor to the use of any other envelope with a tuck-in flap if the opening does not exceed 4½ in. in width. Candidates are recommended to use tongue and slot envelopes or envelopes with a special device to prevent other small packets from becoming entrapped.

†\_packets of this type which exceed 6 in. in length must be secured so that no opening exceeds 4½ in.

## Imprint

The words 'Election Communication' must be printed, stamped, or written at the top of the address side of each packet. Any other printing must be confined to the left-hand side, the right-hand side being reserved exclusively for the address.

## Placing in Order

All packages must be faced in the same way and tied up in bundles of 120 and sorted according to streets. Complete streets in excess of 120 packets may be made up in one bundle. A slip of paper, showing the number of communications it contains, must be attached to each bundle.

## Certificate of Posting

The communications must be accompanied by a prescribed certificate, in duplicate. An unsealed specimen package must be produced for inspection and retention by the local Postmaster.

## Posting Before Nomination Day

A candidate wishing to exercise his right to the free postage before nomination day is required to deposit a sum of £50 as security of payment of postage, and sign a declaration to pay full postage should he not eventually be nominated.

## Unopposed Candidates

No free post will be accepted after nomination day from a candidate returned unopposed.

## Collection by Postal Authorities

Where a large number of communications, say 1,000 or more, are ready for despatch at any one time, arrangements may be made with the local Head Postmaster for them to be collected from the Candidate's committee rooms.

## Delivery

Delivery by the Postal authorities will be made with the least possible delay, but they cannot guarantee delivery of any communication which is posted less than 3 clear days before Polling Day.

## Re-Directed Communications

Any communication which is re-directed from the original address will be forwarded without cost if the new address is sufficient and is within the United Kingdom, provided it is re-posted not later than the day after delivery.

## PREPARE NOW FOR SPRING ELECTIONS

(Continued from page 185)

The motive of social service should not be the desire to obtain the credit and reputation that comes to those who benefit others, but to recognise as a fact that by an appeal to the motive of social service society secures the performance of difficult and unpleasant jobs, which constitute the art of living together in a modern society.

The incentive to do public work must be voluntary action and not pecuniary profit. One should feel that one's work is done for the good of society. Hence one's will, motive, drive, must be ethical. One should try to be immune from bias, favourable or otherwise, and try to make sure that special pleading has no effect on the rightness, the justice, the ethos of one's judgment. One's ideal should be service to the community, the whole community and nothing but the community.

'Imagination,' said Shaw, 'is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire; you will what you imagine; and at last you create what you will.'

As a councillor one should reserve time for pre-digesting the agenda so that no snap decision is made which will later be regretted.

One should not vote because of allegiances to or prejudices against individuals. One's reticence should spring neither from indolence nor fear, nor one's aggressiveness from personal animosity. One should not push responsibility on to others when one has not arrived at a decision on policy because decision is difficult or the ensuing action unpopular. One should be as careful about public finance as one is about one's own.

In the booklet we have given a schematic diagram showing the direct link-up between such supposedly humble groups as Parish Councils and Parish Meetings with Parliament.

We have listed completely the authorities responsible for local government services, membership of the County Council, a section on rateable value and the collection of rates and Local Government in the Administrative County of Northampton.

The good life depends in large measure to-day upon the energy and imagination shown by the elected representatives of the people. Health, education, planning and housing are some of the most important fields of local activity, it is vital that we get the right people to administer them for the good of everyone.

## RUNNING A DISCUSSION GROUP

(Continued from page 189)

is a most exhilarating and valuable experience, something which should be continued and repeated. And anyone who has had this experience knows how important it is to keep Discussion Groups in their proper role.

The secret of a good Discussion Group is that it is organised conversation and only with organisation can the necessary ease, familiarity and informality be achieved. Only good conversation is worth taking pains about.

A leader who knows his or her business is the first essential. They need proper training because this, like so many other jobs which members undertake, is a skilled job.

He must realise that dominance and the imposition of his own views have no place in the properly run Discussion Group. He

should also realise that talking is not his principal function, rather should he guide and lead the discussion, keeping it to the point, seeing that everyone gets, and takes, a fair share, planning the discussion step by step, in short, acting as chairman.

The main part of the Discussion Group Leader's job is done before the group meets. A subject must be chosen, preferably by the group itself at their previous meeting. It is essential that everyone takes a share in selecting what they want to talk about. After that, it must be prepared and thought out in detail.

There are two simple rules which should be followed:

(1) The subject must be broken up which will lead to further points in later discussions; and

(2) The subject must be within the experience of everyone in the group, no matter how they vary in composition.

# Labour Party Publications

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Four shillings per year post free.

The Labour Publications Department,  
Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1.